

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00

SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 EB-08 FAA-00 DOTE-00 /070 W

-----013131 220702Z /13

O 220649Z APR 78

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0870

INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TOKYO IMMEDIATE

USMISSION USBERLIN IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 08646

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAIR, KS, US, JA, UR

SUBJECT: KAL AIRCRAFT IN USSR

REF: SEOUL 3343 (NOTAL)

1. WE HAVE HEARD NOTHING AS YET THAT WOULD CONFIRM REPORT THAT SOVIETS MAY DETAIN CAPTAIN OF DOWNED KOREAN AIRCRAFT. NEVERTHELESS, WE CANNOT PRECLUDE THAT POSSIBILITY.

2. TASS PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT ON INCIDENT STATES THAT "COMPETENT SOVIET AUTHORITIES ARE INVESTIGATING THE CAUSES OF THIS VIOLATION OF THE SOVIET UNION'S AIRSPACE," THE SAME PHRASEOLOGY WAS USED IN SOVIET NON-PAPER HANDED TO DCM, AND DURING CONVERSATION WITH KAPITSA OF SOVIET MFA, HE REFERRED SEVERAL TIMES TO "ERRATIC" BEHAVIOR OF AIRCRAFT AND FAILURE TO FOLLOW SOVIET INSTRUCTIONS TO LAND. EVEN MORE OMINOUS WAS STATEMENT BY DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER KORNIYENKO TO AMBASSADOR THAT HE HAD HEARD "RUMOR" THAT CREW WAS "DRUNK", ALTHOUGH THIS STATEMENT WAS NOT REPEATED BY KAPITSA IN MFA.

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3. TASS ANNOUNCEMENT AND NON-PAPER BOTH CARRIED SOMEWHAT MORE FAVORABLE LANGUAGE, HOWEVER, STATING THAT "PASSENGERS AND CREW" WERE TAKEN TO NEAREST POPULATED LOCALITY AND ARRANGEMENTS ARE BEING MADE FOR "THEIR" TRANSPORT (OTPRAVKA) FROM TERRITORY OF USSR. SINCE LAST PARAGRAPH OF NON-PAPER SPOKE OF MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION

TRANSPORTING "PASSENGERS" TO MURMANSK FOR POSSIBLE REPATRIATION BY U.S. AIRCRAFT, E/C COUNSELOR SUBSEQUENTLY CALLED MFA OFFICIAL (TRIFINOV) WHO WAS PRESENT KAPITSA SPOKE TO DCM TO ASK SPECIFICALLY IF SOVIETS INTENDED TO REPATRIATE CREW AS WELL AS PASSENGERS IN VIEW OF THIS POSSIBLE DISCREPANCY. TRIFINOV RESPONDED THAT "ALL WHO WERE ON BOARD THE AIRCRAFT" MAY BE PICKED UP BY U.S. AIRCRAFT IN MURMANSK.

4. IN SUM, DESPITE A RATHER SOMBER BACKGROUND, WE HAVE HEARD NOTHING SPECIFIC TO BELIEVE CAPTAIN WILL BE DETAINED AND HAVE STATEMENT OF ONE MFA OFFICIAL THAT EVERYONE WILL BE REPATRIATED.

5. IF SEOUL OR TOKYO HAVE ANY FURTHER INFORMATION WHICH WOULD SHED LIGHT OR EVALUATE REPORT THAT CAPTAIN WILL BE DETAINED, WE WOULD LIKE TO KNOW AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
TOON

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Message Attributes

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Draft Date: 22 apr 1978
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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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